



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
September 30 – October 4, 2013

‘Culturally’ unfit Winnipeg couple allowed to keep Métis foster child for now, but may never be able to adopt him

[National Post](#)

October 2, 2013

Tristin Hopper



Manitoba's Métis Child and Family Services Authority's stated mission is to have "Metis families ... care for and nurture Metis children."

A Winnipeg couple accused of being “culturally” unfit to raise a Métis foster child have successfully blocked efforts to have the child seized — although the pair’s Filipino heritage may stand in the way of their efforts to make the boy their legal son.

“[The boy] loves his foster parents and they love him,” says a decision drafted last week by an independent arbitrator. “That love should be given an opportunity to continue and blossom.”

The case concerns two unidentified foster parents, aged 44 and 55, who first obtained custody of a Métis boy two years ago, when he was only six months old.

The couple, who have no children of their own due to infertility, reported that they immediately “fell in love” with the boy. In adjudication documents they said “that if they had been given the opportunity to adopt [the boy] immediately they would have taken it.”

[The boy] loves his foster parents and they love him

Instead, Manitoba's Métis Child and Family Services Authority (MCFSA), which had given them custody of the child, moved to have the boy sent to a "culturally appropriate" household.

The Authority cannot comment on specific cases, although the actions were very much in line with its stated mission to have "Métis families ... care for and nurture Métis children."

The agency was created in reaction to the "Sixties Scoop," a government policy, beginning in the 1960s, of seizing children from aboriginal communities and adopting them out to non-aboriginal families.

Last week, Manitoba Métis Federation president David Chartrand specifically mentioned the Scoop in expressing his support for the Authority, saying in a statement "the Manitoba Métis Federation will never allow Métis children to suffer in that way again."

Although he is legally Métis, the boy has a "European appearance," note adjudication documents: He has a Ukrainian father, a Scottish, Dutch and Irish maternal grandmother and is light-skinned with blue eyes and light brown hair.

The boy's birth mother testified that she identified as white growing up, and had never met her Métis father, whom she described as having a mixture of "French" and "native" ancestry.

She said she preferred the boy stay with his current foster parents.

For now, last week's decision by adjudicator Jennifer Cooper blocks the efforts by MCFSA to remove the boy, although the foster parents will be unable to adopt the child without the Authority's approval — and the MCFSA can still take the issue to court to order an adoption to a different home.

With that, Ms. Cooper closed her decision with a plea for "co-operation" between the two parties.

"In the best possible world, the foster parents would welcome and embrace the understanding that [the boy] is Métis, despite his European appearance," wrote Ms. Cooper.

In response, she added, the Métis Child and Family Services Authority would recognize these "sincere efforts" and sign off on his adoption.

"This mutual cooperation, in [the boy's] best interests, would support the greatest likelihood of a successful outcome for him."

Supporting Aboriginal communities: A look at Aboriginal research at Dal

[Dal News](#)

October 2, 2013

Ryan McNutt (with files from Alana Milner)



Lucia Fanning (left) leads Fish-WIKS, a research project that looks at bringing together western and indigenous knowledge systems to better manage fishery resources. (Provided photo)

Given Dalhousie's location in the heart of Mi'kmaq territory, it's perhaps not surprising to find a number of research projects taking place with Aboriginal and Indigenous communities.

What might be surprising, though, are their variety — and the degree to which they span various communities.

Research with Aboriginal and Indigenous communities takes place in nine of Dal's 12 faculties, with the largest number of projects in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Health Professions. In total, more than 50 researchers along with graduate students and staff are engaged in direct and significant research partnership with Aboriginal and Indigenous communities.

Embracing "wholeness"

A number of these projects involve Dal's Heather Castleden with the School for Research and Environmental Studies. She's the co-principal investigator in the Atlantic Aboriginal Health Research Program, and recently received a New

Investigator Salary Award from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. The award, presented to promising new researchers, allows her to focus more of her time on research.

Dr. Castleden says research involving Aboriginal communities needs to be, “respectful, relevant and responsible.” And the best way to achieve this, she says, is to work across various disciplines and directly with Aboriginal and Indigenous communities.

“In my experience, research involving Indigenous peoples on issues that are important to them requires interdisciplinary approaches,” she explains. “Unlike western — by this I mean white/scientific — ways of thinking, most Indigenous worldviews that I have come into contact with do not silo research problems into one category or another. Instead, they embrace the wholeness of problems, taking into consideration history, present conditions, and the future — from the individual to the universe.”

Masters student Ella Bennet held her masters thesis defence in the Pictou Landing First Nation, where she conducted her research in partnership with the Pictou Landing Native Women’s Association.

“I choose Dalhousie for my graduate work as I wanted to undertake Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) with an Aboriginal community on an environmental issue that was important to them,” she explains. The defence, “allowed for community members to hear what their Elders shared and enabled me to show my appreciation to the participants.

“By creating these links between researchers and communities we create respectful and relevant research relationships.”

Broad perspectives

Dalhousie’s Research website is currently featuring [profiles of Dal faculty](#) involved in Aboriginal research projects. They include:

- The development of a First Nations Community Planning Model
- Fish-WIKS, a research project that looks at bringing together western and indigenous knowledge systems to better manage fishery resources.
- A partnership with the Government of Nunavut to improve lagoon and wetland wastewater treatment.
- “*Kungatsiajuk*,” a research team focused on the oral health of children living in southeastern Labrador.
- Ongoing studies on treaties and contemporary social, political, economic and legal relations with Indigenous peoples.

To learn more about these and other projects, [visit Dal's Research website](#).

BC First Nations Health Authority Mark Historic Health Services Takeover: Northwest First Nations groups react to the changeover in services

[CFTK-TV](#)

October 1, 2013

Katherine Dow

It's being hailed as a historic day in aboriginal self-governance. The BC First Nations Health Authority officially took over management on October 1 of Health Canada's First Nations Inuit Health Branch. This represents the transfer of dozens of nurses stations and health care centres across the province, as well as an operating budget from the federal government of \$377 million and \$4.7 billion from the province over 9 years.

Grand Chief Doug Kelly, chair of the First Nations Health Authority says the takeover from the federally-run Health Canada service is a milestone for First Nations people across Canada.

"We're beginning the journey to reclaim our independence by having the federal government and the province of British Columbia share with us the responsibility for the care and well-being of our own citizens," Kelly said.

Chief Rick McLean of the Tahltan First Nation says the new authority will be less rigid with the budget, allowing communities to re-allocate program dollars to certain areas of need. For the Tahltan, that's more seniors services for their more elderly communities.

"So if we're able to move money around to different programs that are needed in the community, that will give us that flexibility," Chief McLean explained.

Still, he says he's worried that this new entity could become riddled with the same issues that bogged down the old, federally-run service.

"We're deeply concerned that we may be creating another bureaucracy where a bunch of money doesn't get funneled down to the community, and the whole goal is to get more dollars at the community level," he said.

Meanwhile, deputy chief Frank Alec of the Lake Babine Nation has similar concerns. He says the old, federally-run system didn't reflect his community's needs for holistic approaches over traditional medicine. He says this time around, they're being cautious that their community's specific needs are being met.

"We know that the transition is happening, and beyond the transition is what our needs and demands -- this is where our needs and demands will definitely be a big concern," he said.

As of Oct. 1, the FNHA now manages about 300 staff member and a federal budget that funds health-care specific social workers, dentists and nurses for about 150,000 Aboriginal people throughout the province.

B.C. First Nations take over their own health care services: For Canadian aboriginals, a lot is riding on B.C.'s grand experiment, which is a decade in the making

[Vancouver Sun](#)

September 30, 2013

Peter O'Neil



Sto:lo Tribal Council Grand Chief Doug Kelly, who is also chairman of the First Nations Health Council, welcomes Health Canada nurse Candace Corston, who is transferring to the new B.C. First Nations Health Authority as it takes over aboriginal health services in B.C. Tuesday.

OTTAWA — The decades-long push to aboriginal self-government in Canada will cross a major threshold Tuesday with a historic, and potentially risky, change in the management of health services in B.C.

The federal government, which is responsible for health services on reserves, is handing over the budget, 134 staff, and the office keys in B.C. to a new entity called the First Nations Health Authority.

The authority will move into Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch Pacific regional office in Vancouver on Oct. 1, and at the same time assume control of Health Canada's several dozen nursing stations and health centres in B.C. Eventually, the authority hopes to build its own head office in a Lower Mainland First Nations community.

The new authority, with just under 300 staff, takes over the federal government's \$377.8-million annual budget that funds nurses, health care-focused social workers, dentists and, eventually, doctors serving roughly 150,000 aboriginals across the province.

The federal government expects to transfer control of a total of \$4.7 billion in funding over the 10-year life of the agreement.

The authority will also get \$83.5 million over nine years from the B.C. government, which began flowing in 2011.

If successful, the handover would provide a template — and a pool of experts — for First Nations leaders elsewhere in Canada who are closely watching the B.C. experiment.

A positive handover would also cement B.C.'s reputation as Canada's most progressive province in terms of aboriginal self-government innovation and leadership.

But there is some wariness among Health Canada staff who refused the authority's job offer, and some nervousness among First Nations communities about uncertainty over the future.

"It's a huge step," said Sto:lo Tribal Council Grand Chief Doug Kelly, who is also chairman of the First Nations Health Council. The council is a 15-person team of aboriginal political leaders that broadly oversees — but is not supposed to politically interfere with — the authority's work.

Kelly said it's appropriate that B.C. First Nations leaders were putting final touches on the takeover two weeks ago at the same time Ottawa's Truth and Reconciliation

Commission held an event in Vancouver to discuss the decades of mental, emotional and physical damage caused by Canada's residential school policy.

Putting young children into residential schools to assimilate them "reflected a policy that basically said Indians could not take care of themselves, that they had to be wards of the government and weren't worthy of the rights given to other Canadians, including immigrants," Kelly said in an interview.

"So this is a huge departure from colonial thinking, and it's real progress."

The new authority is expected to have a far closer relationship with the B.C. government than Health Canada did, in coordinating resources to assist communities.

That point was not lost on federal Health Minister Rona Ambrose in statement on the handover.

"The transfer of responsibilities empowers First Nations while promoting a better, more responsive and integrated model of health service delivery," Ambrose told The Vancouver Sun.

There is some trepidation in communities like Hartley Bay, one of B.C.'s most remote aboriginal communities that has only float plane or boat access to doctors in nearby Prince Rupert.

The community has relied on a Health Canada-supplied nurse. A year ago a Prince Rupert-based doctor working under the B.C. government's Northern Health Authority, who made twice-monthly visits to the community, stopped coming.

"We haven't been getting that good a service (from Health Canada) anyway, but I am concerned (about the transition)," said Arnold Clifton, the chief councillor of the Hartley Bay band council.

Dr. John O'Neil, dean of Simon Fraser University's health sciences faculty and an expert on aboriginal health issues, supports the move despite inevitable struggles filling gaps after 20 full-time Health Canada nurses refused the job offers from the First Nations authority.

Research, O'Neil said, has consistently shown that aboriginal communities are healthier when they run their own nursing stations and other health facilities.

He said the new authority's "extraordinary" staff are capable of setting a positive example for the rest of the country.

"This is a historic transformation, and the rest of the First Nations world is watching."

But, O'Neil said the authority faces considerable risks, including the challenge of dealing with the same cost issues facing provincial health ministries, and the difficulty in finding nurses to work in remote locations.

First Nations communities also have more significant health issues than most Canadians, especially a high rate of diabetes, obesity and substance abuse.

Kelly said aboriginal leaders and the First Nations Health Authority staff, led by chief executive Joe Gallagher, know there is enormous pressure to succeed.

"Yes, there are incredible expectations that B.C. First Nations will have improved services and health outcomes and greater decision-making, and that we'll do the job. We feel the expectations, but it's a very powerful motivator to get it done, to get it right, to learn from our mistakes, and to keep on growing."

Formal negotiations between Ottawa, the B.C. government and First Nations leaders began in 2005, with a final agreement in 2011.

Kelly said B.C. aboriginal leaders were already comfortable with the transition because roughly 150 of the 203 aboriginal communities already have Health Canada agreements for band to operate local health centres. Those centres will now receive their funding through the new authority.

But the launch missed its April 2013 deadline to begin operations, and one of the challenges has been to integrate anxious federal bureaucrats and the various unions representing the estimated 230 Health Canada workers who received job offers. Only 135 of them, plus 30 contract and part-time employees, accepted the move, with the rest finding other government jobs, taking early retirement, or opting to be laid off.

While nurses tend support the notion that a local authority is better-suited than a far-off and large Ottawa bureaucracy to handle public health matters, many are concerned about employer-employee relations in remote communities under the new system, said a spokesman for the Professional Institute of the Public Service of

Canada, which represents the nurses and other professionals involved in the transition.

"We're behind this project, it's historic," Jamie Dunn said.

But he said nursing in remote aboriginal communities is one of the profession's most challenging jobs, and some are concerned about the increased influence of "band politics" on their jobs.

"It's the fear of the unknown. Health Canada was always an intermediary between the band and employees, and now bands are in control through the FNHA. How will this influence the employment relationship?"

There have also been union-authority tensions that went to the B.C. Labour Relations Board, which ruled against the authority's bid to require workers to be represented by a single union.

But Dunn said his members see potential for innovative steps that could improve health outcomes.

"The feedback we got is, 'There's all kinds of potential to improve care for First Nations communities — if they'll listen to us.'"

The First Nations Health Authority's website is advertising for just under three dozen positions, the majority nurses, with many posted by band-run health centres rather than the authority. Most are in isolated communities on the north coast and B.C. interior, including like Bella Bella and Port Simpson.

Kelly, who noted that the Health Canada also had serious staffing issues, said the authority is committed to ensuring communities aren't left without nurses in the transition. He said it will fill gaps by either hiring nurses through agencies, as Health Canada regularly did, or by working co-operatively with the provincial government to share staff.

Kelly said he understands the concerns of Health Canada nurses about being on the wrong end of band politics, but said the health authority and the political council he chairs were set up in a way to specifically avoid political interference in health operations.

"There is an ironclad separation of business and politics. The government of Canada, the province of B.C., and more important the B.C. chiefs required this. So while I understand the fear I don't agree with the conclusion."

He had a similar message for the Hartley Bay chief. While there may be short-term transition issues, he said young aboriginal British Columbians will see a clearer path to becoming doctors, dentists, nurses and health administrators who can remain in, or serve, their communities.

"Yes, there's nervousness, but there's also a lot of hope and optimism.

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Alberta Metis Ask Supreme Court to Hear Harvesting Rights Test Case on the Ten Year Anniversary of Landmark Powley Case

[Canada NewsWire](#)

Sept. 30, 2013

Powley Test 'Incomprehensible and Inaccessible' to Prairie Métis

EDMONTON, Sept. 30, 2013 /CNW/ - Edmonton, AB (September 30, 2013) - Ten years to the month after the Supreme Court of Canada released its landmark decision on Métis harvesting rights in *R. v. Powley*, Alberta Métis are asking the high court to once again turn its attention to the issue of Métis harvesting rights. This time the test case—*R. v. Hirsekorn*—is about how to apply the Supreme Court's test in *Powley* to the descendants of the well-known Métis buffalo hunters of the plains.

The *Powley* case dealt with the Sault Ste Marie Métis community on the Upper Great Lakes, who largely lived at the same settlement and hunted in the environs of that location. The *Hirsekorn* case deals with the Métis buffalo hunters who maintained a nomadic lifestyle—following a migratory herd across the prairies—and who rarely or never returning to an established settlement. The key question in the case is: does the *Powley* test need to be modified or is it flexible enough to fulfill the promise of s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* to the prairie Métis?

Since 2003, courts of the prairies have struggled to apply the *Powley* test to the prairie Métis. Notably, in Mr. Hirsekorn's case, each level of court in Alberta re-interpreted and re-applied the *Powley* test differently than the court below. This legal uncertainty is compounded by conflicting court decisions in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta that cannot be reconciled. In one situation, a Métis fishing right is recognized by the Manitoba courts and the Manitoba Government on

one side of a lake, with a Saskatchewan court denying any Métis fishing right on the west side of the same lake.

Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras said, "Our people do not believe that the recognition of our harvesting rights should be dependent on political whim or whether we are before a judge that decides to apply the *Powley* test in a flexible manner."

"Constitutional rights should not be dealt with in such an arbitrary manner. The current situation results in the promise of s. 35 to the prairie Métis being incomprehensible and inaccessible to our people on-the-ground. We believe guidance from the Supreme Court is needed to avoid injustice," added President Poitras.

Jason Madden, Legal Counsel for Mr. Hirsekorn and the MNA, added, "It's perverse that the test the Supreme Court established to 'recognize and affirm' the rights of different Métis groups is now being used to deny the rights of one of the best-known face of the Métis Nation in Canada—the descendants of the buffalo hunters of the plains—but the prairie courts are saying *Powley* 'ties their hands.'"

"We believe the Supreme Court will want to provide clarity and guidance on this important legal issue in order to ensure the promise of s. 35 to the largest Métis population in Canada—the prairie Métis—is not rendered meaningless courts by rigidity of form triumphing over substance."

Additional information and a copy of the Application for Leave to Appeal in the *Hirsekorn* case is available at www.albertametis.com.

Aboriginal group asks for UN meeting on Gateway

[Prince George Citizen](#)

October 3, 2013

Peter James

A First Nations group wants the United Nations to step in and officiate its dispute with the province over preliminary work surrounding the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline.

The Yinka Dene Alliance, a group of First Nations west of Prince George along the proposed route of the Alberta-to-Kitimat oil and condensate pipelines, has requested a meeting with the United Nations special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples James Anaya during Anaya's upcoming visit to Canada.

"Every time we try to do something with [with the provincial or federal government] they end up changing legislation, they change the act, the change policy, the

change regulation instead of dealing with the real issue," Nadleh Whut'en chief Martin Louie said. "We're sort of tired now, we've been doing the same thing for the last 15 years dealing with changes in policies, regulations and acts and we've got nowhere else to go."

Louie hasn't heard yet if Anya will grant a meeting during his official visit next week.

The Yinka Dene are particularly upset with plans by Northern Gateway to do preliminary work along the route. The alliance asking the province to deny any permits until after a National Energy Board Joint Review Panel offers its recommendation at the end of December.

Northern Gateway has requested 33 provincial permits for geotechnical and geophysical work the company said it needs to do in order to resolve unanswered questions that came out of the environmental assessment hearings. Northern Gateway spokesman Ivan Giesbrecht said none of the permits have been granted, but one third are close to being approved.

Spirit Runner: App for active aboriginal youth developed in Edmonton

[Edmonton Journal](#)

September 29, 2013

Chris Zdeb



Chelsea Wahsatnow uses the Spirit Runneractivity app during a workout session at Boyle Street Education Centre. Photograph by: John Lucas, Edmonton Journal

EDMONTON - Inactivity and obesity are problems common to many Canadian kids, but even more so for aboriginal youth. More than 50 per cent of First Nations youth living on reserves are overweight or obese

compared to 25 per cent of youth in the general population.

Kyle Wolfe, 25, an education student who volunteers at the Hobbema rec centre south of Edmonton, blames lack of recreational facilities, lack of education about fitness and nutrition, and lack of parental support for living a healthier life. He sees

huge deterrents in homes where there is alcohol or drug abuse, or parents not having money to register kids for activities or sports like hockey, especially if the family is on social assistance.

That's why Wolfe is excited about a new free activity app that he thinks addresses several of these issues.

Spirit Runner was created to engage aboriginal youth (and adults) and encourage regular activity in their lives. The goal is to keep youth healthy and occupied in positive ways through their teen years, says Spirit Runner executive director Don Patterson, who co-founded the app with project director Janice Ryan of Edmonton.

The Spirit Runner icon, designed by aboriginal artist Jessica Desmoulin, features a running hare and fox — which means young and spirited. The hare represents the female spirit in aboriginal culture; the fox represents the male spirit, Ryan explains.

Last year, Patterson, a long-distance cyclist from Mississauga, Ontario who passionately believes that kids should have equal opportunities for an active and healthy lifestyle, cycled 7,200 kilometres across Canada in 28 days. He wanted to promote keeping youth active and raise funds for local YMCAs so that more kids can participate in their programs.

It was Ryan who suggested Patterson do something beyond raising money for the kids.

"Why don't you actually do something for the kids like maybe an activity app so that they could record their workouts, track their progress?" she suggested. "The GPS could tell them how many miles they've gone, show them a map of where they've gone and it could have reminders.

"Then it's something that's with them, because every time I see children at a bus stop they're looking down at the (electronic devices in the) palms of their hands," Ryan explained. "Kids are really into their technology so you might as well embrace it instead of fight it."

Patterson loved the idea and lined up funding for Ryan to take it to the next level. She gathered aboriginal youth from Edmonton, Morinville and Onoway in January to talk about the value of an activity app and what it should include.

Almost all of the kids had either an iPhone or an iPod and confirmed their attachment to the devices. It was definitely the best way to get the word out to them about the value of getting and staying active, they said.

Ryan then hired Fission Media in Edmonton to develop the app, which was tested by aboriginal kids, nine to 16-years-olds, at the Boyle Street Education Centre, a charter high school in Edmonton; the Crystal Kids Youth Centre, also in Edmonton; and the Ermineskin Cree band at Hobbema.

The young testers suggested the app should include motivational quotes.

"They said, 'We really sometimes have bad days and we really don't know who to talk to,'" Ryan said, "so I added 240 universal motivational quotes from some world leaders, aboriginal leaders, Apache proverbs, author Sun Bear, and Chief Dan George, as well as Mahatma Gandhi, John F. Kennedy, Wayne Gretzky and Michael Jordan," Ryan says.

The kids also said it was important to be rewarded for their efforts, so an Achievement button was added that instantly tells them, for example, that they've just walked or biked a kilometre. There are 90 achievements embedded in the app that encourage kids to do more activities.

Chelsea Wahsatnow, who is working toward a high school diploma at the Boyle Street Education Centre, has been using the Spirit Runner app since June. She wanted to get more active and figured the app would motivate her. She also wanted to be in better shape to pursue her goal of becoming a chef, noting that it's a hard job that can't be done by sitting around.

Wahsatnow says she uses the app every day. It has helped her become more active — a three-month YMCA pass has her working out more — and the motivational quotes "keep me going," adds the 19-year-old, who is homeless and lives at the Hope Mission.

Boyle Street Education Centre principal Scott Meunier bought some iPods for the school for students to use the app during gym class to track their movements.

"There's a little bit more to wellness than just physical movement, even though that's a main part of it," he says, but it is positive for physical and emotional well-being.

"This is helping Chelsea to attend school and to be well while she's here."

Wolfe, who had 15 kids test the app, says it was readily embraced by the more sports-minded, active kids, but its appeal to the more sedentary shows it has potential to get them moving more too, he says.

"My own son has always been very active and he was interested in the app and one of his buddies uses it all the time, even just for reminders.

"A lot of apps nowadays are mostly games so the kids are usually just sitting there playing the device rather than being active, so I think this app is great for getting kids who are less active, more active."

The Spirit Runner app can be downloaded for free from spiritrannerapp.com or from iTunes.

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All professions should be forced to learn about aboriginal residential schools: judge

National Post

October 2, 2013

Chinta Puxley



Darryl Dyck/The Canadian Press/Assem

WINNIPEG — The chairman of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission says all professions should have to undergo mandatory training about residential schools as the country tries to undo some of the deep-seeded trauma inflicted by the policy to "take the Indian out of the child."

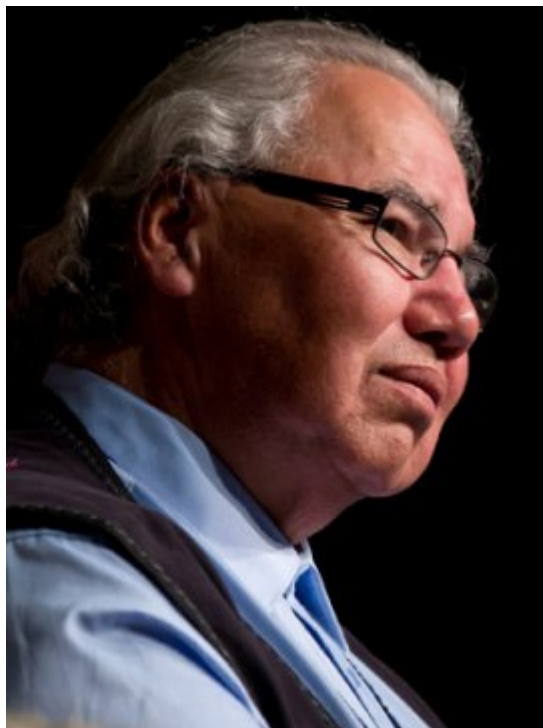
the Indian out of the child."

Justice Murray Sinclair told a suicide prevention conference in Winnipeg on Wednesday that judges are legally required to learn about residential schools and the same should be mandatory for anyone working with aboriginal people.

"There isn't a single profession in Canada that shouldn't be required to understand the aboriginal experience in this country because all professions deal with aboriginal people, particularly in the West, where the population of aboriginal people is so significant," Sinclair said.

Medical professionals in particular need to understand the legacy of residential schools, he said.

"This requirement should be imposed upon all of those who are treating aboriginal people," Sinclair said. "Every medical doctor and every nurse being trained at a training program at a hospital or university in this country should be required to take a course in the residential school experience."



Darryl Dyck/CP/FilesJustice Murray

Sinclair pointed to a Winnipeg hospital where an aboriginal man in a wheelchair died during a 34-hour wait in the emergency waiting room. The Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg serves not only urban aboriginals, but all those from northern Manitoba who are sent for medical treatment, Sinclair said.

"All of those aboriginal patients are being sent to professionals who have not been trained in cultural competence," he said. "That's contributed to hesitation on the part of the aboriginal community to seek medical advice when they feel they are not going to be treated properly. That exacerbates the problems that they face."

About 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Metis children were taken from their families and forced to attend the government schools over much of the last century. The last school, outside Regina, closed in 1996.

The \$60-million truth and reconciliation commission is part of a landmark compensation deal between the federal government, the Crown and residential school survivors. Sinclair and his commissioners have visited hundreds of communities and have heard graphic details of trauma, including rampant sexual and physical abuse.

Of the 80,000 people who have made claims under the compensation deal, Sinclair said half say they sustained injuries of one form or another. Survivors suffer from depression, thoughts of suicide, substance abuse and an inability to show affection, he said. Those who live with survivors suffer as well, Sinclair said.

"Trauma feeds on trauma. Once there is a cycle that's started of suicides or crime or physical violence, it begins to feed upon itself and passes from generation to generation," Sinclair said. "Residential schools are probably the most significant historical trauma that aboriginal people in this country have experienced."

The commission has nine months left in its mandate but Sinclair said it may require an extension. The commission has had difficulty obtaining documents in Library and Archives Canada, despite a court order requiring all archival records be turned over, he said.

Bureaucratic and "systemic" delays may mean the commission will have a hard time meeting its deadline of July 1, 2014, Sinclair said.

"We've raised that with the parties and we'll have a discussion with them soon once we know when the documents can start to flow," he said.

Cheslatta aboriginals seek Kenney Dam water licence

[Globe And Mail](#)

Sep. 30 2013, 9:33 PM EDT

Dirk Meissner



The Cheslatta Carrier Nation plans to harness the Nechako River to power a smelter.

An aboriginal band in north-central B.C. has moved toward harnessing the power of a hydro-electric dam that flooded their territory and imprinted images of floating coffins into their history.

Sixty-two years after the Kenney Dam flooded the traditional territory of the Cheslatta Carrier Nation, destroying hunting, fishing and living areas and drying up parts of the Nechako River, the Prince George-area nation plans to profit from the structure built without their consultation to power the Rio Tinto Alcan smelter in Kitimat.

Cheslatta spokesman Mike Robertson said the Cheslatta formally applied for a provincial water licence on Monday.

Mr. Robertson said the band has approached BC Hydro with plans to develop a 45-megawatt hydroelectric project at the Kenney Dam site that would generate power from a proposed spillway nearby.

"We've been doing formal research on this project for 30 years or more," said Mr. Robertson. "It's not a new project by any means but it's the first time somebody's actually started the engine and started driving the project."

Mr. Robertson said the Cheslatta's Nechako River Legacy Project aims to stop flooding of Cheslatta Lake and river by releasing water from the Kenney Dam reservoir directly into the 10-kilometre section of the Nechako River, including the Nechako River Canyon, which has been dry since 1952 when the dam was constructed to create energy to power the aluminum smelter in Kitimat.

The Cheslatta Nation was not consulted about the project, which reversed the flow of the Nechako River through a 16-kilometre tunnel to Kemano, the site of the smelter power plant near Kitimat.

Mr. Robertson said the dam's original design and construction did not include a spillway and massive releases of water from the reservoir system forced the Cheslatta to flee villages. The Cheslatta River valley was flooded, with the surge of water depositing tons of silt, gravel and debris into Cheslatta Lake.

The dam's water also destroyed grave sites and human remains and fragments from smashed caskets are still being discovered today along the Cheslatta Lake shoreline, he said.

"Submitting this application formally starts the process of getting back the water that was taken from us 62 years ago when the government issued a private company licence to all of the water in Cheslatta traditional territory" Chief Richard Peters said in a statement.

The project envisions creating a small outlet of water from the dam that would power hydroelectric turbines, which would be connected to the BC Hydro grid. The band would earn revenue by selling the power to Hydro and once through the turbines, the water would then flow into the portions of the Nechako River that have been dry for so long.

The \$280-million Nechako River Legacy Project would face up to two years of environmental approval processes, with a possible construction date within three years, Mr. Robertson said.

"It's incredibly significant what happened here [today]," said Mr. Robertson from Prince George. "That's been a long outstanding dream of the Cheslatta people, to actually have authority over the water inside their territory."

But Rio Tinto Alcan controls the water flows through the Kenny Dam and generates huge revenues from the dam's power generation. The company would need to be on board with the Cheslatta project if the band hopes to generate some of its own power.

Rio Tinto Alcan released a statement saying the company has participated in talks regarding the possibility of enhancing the downstream environment of the Nechako River by constructing a water-release facility at the Kenney Dam.

But company spokeswoman Colleen Nyce said in a statement that the water the Cheslatta propose to use for their legacy project is water connected to a spillway linked to the dam's reservoir system at Skins Lake and there are legal agreements in place between the company and the federal and provincial governments. She would not elaborate on whether this would pose an obstacle to the Cheslatta.

She said Rio Tinto Alcan remains committed to working with the Cheslatta as they conduct technical work related to their project.

Sisters in Spirit' banner stolen days before event

[CTV News](#)

September 30, 2013 4:08PM MDT

Ryan White

Organizers of an annual event that brings awareness to the disturbing number of missing or murdered Aboriginal women are outraged by the theft of a promotional sign.

On October 4, people will gather on Stephen Avenue Mall to remember the lost lives of Native women who have disappeared or have been victims of homicide.

Members of the Awo Taan Healing Lodge, the '[Sisters in Spirit](#)' organizers, spend a significant amount of time throughout the year designing two awareness banners and fundraising to have the signs made.



The remaining 'Sisters in Spirit Vigil' banner above Anderson Rd. in the city's southwest

One of the two banners, measuring more than a metre tall and nine metres wide,

was removed from a northwest pedestrian overpass near Market Mall on Sunday.

"It's huge, so whoever stole this banner carefully thought this out," said Awo Taan Healing Lodge's Josie Nepinak. "The banner was put up by a construction company who donated their time."

Nepinak says the \$450 sign was cabled to the bridge above Shaganappi Trail N.W. and would require tools to cut it down.

'Sisters in Spirit' organizers fear the theft was based in prejudice.

"We see it as an act of racism against Aboriginal women," said Nepinak, "against the ceremony that's involved with missing and murdered Aboriginal women."

The group had the proper permits to hang the banner and have reported the theft to the Calgary Police Service. The CPS Hate Crimes Unit is investigating.

Since the 1980's, over 600 Aboriginal women and girls have gone missing or were murdered in Canada, 93 of which are Albertans. The Stephen Avenue event, the 9th annual Sisters in Spirit, will be a sacred ceremony to remember their lives.

Organizers say the stolen banner will be a rallying point at this year's event.

"With the sign going missing it will just make us stronger as people," said Samantha Green. "It will make us drum louder and sing louder, and put our message across as loud as we can."

With files from CTV's Kevin Fleming

Quebec-Labrador aboriginal groups ponder caribou conservation: "We have made great progress"

[Nunatsiaq News](#)

October 02, 2013 - 9:30 am

Sarah Rogers



Participants in the Ungava Peninsula Caribou Aboriginal Round Table met in Nain, Labrador last week. The group said they will produce a conservation plan for the region's three caribou herds by next April. (HANDOUT PHOTO)

Members of the Ungava Caribou Aboriginal Roundtable say they continue to make progress towards a conservation plan for the ailing caribou

herds in Labrador and northern Quebec.

The roundtable, whose membership includes the Inuit of Nunavik and Nunatsiavut along with the Naskapi, Cree, Innu and Métis nations, was [created earlier this year](#) to address the drastic drop in local herd numbers in recent years.

The group met for a third time Sept. 24 to Sept. 26 in Nain, Labrador.

"We have made great progress since the first coming together of the round table," said Adamie Delisle Alaku, Nunavik representative and co-chair of the roundtable, "considering the many views and opinions around the table, the progress is incredible and most importantly it is built on consensus and genuine trust."

One example of those "many views:" Newfoundland put a five-year ban on all caribou hunting earlier this year in Labrador, which Inuit say they're ready to respect for two years, but which Innu have contested.

Despite the differences in opinion, all members agree they must slow the decline of the George River caribou herd and the uncertain future of the Leaf River and Torngat herds.

"All nations and aboriginal governments are committed to sacrifices aimed at ensuring the survival of Ungava caribou, in particular for the George River herd," says a Sept. 27 news release.

"We all understand the severity in the decline of the George River herd, and we're trying to help preserve its future," Alaku said. "Nunavik hasn't even seen the herd for three years."

The George River herd population is currently estimated [at only about 27,600 animals](#).

That's about a third of the roughly 74,000 caribou that were estimated two years ago and much lower than the 385,000 caribou estimated in 2001.

One of the roundtable's priorities in ensuring the sustenance hunt can carry on in Aboriginal communities, with participating nations look at alternative sources of food.

One of those potential sources is marine mammals, but Alaku said groups outside Quebec are also asking about access to the Leaf River herd – a herd that is not considered to be in top health.

The results of the 2011 population survey of Nunavik's Leaf River caribou herd [established the size of the herd at 430,000 caribou](#) — give or take about 98,000

animals. Adult survival rates and the number of calves produced were low, the survey found.

"It's a touchy subject for (Quebec's) Cree, Naskapi and Inuit," Alaku told *Nunatsiaq News*, "because we have treaty rights under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, and some nations don't have treaties."

Fortunately, Alaku said, Nunavik has its own program in place to ensure Nunavimmiut get their share of country foods when animals are scarce.

Though the region's hunter support program, meat from one community is divided and shared with other communities in need. Last winter in Kuujjuaraapik, where there happened to be an abundance of Leaf River caribou, the animals were hunted and shared with communities along the Ungava coast where fewer caribou had come the previous season.

But not all nations have that kind of support, Alaku said, which is difficult for communities that rely on the caribou, both for their livelihood and spiritually.

All these issues must be discussed at regional levels before the caribou roundtable meets a fourth time, in April 2014.

That's when the group is expected to table a conservation plan to help protect the future of all three herds, a plan that is meant to address both scientific and aboriginal knowledge, habitat conservation, harvesting, monitoring and food security.

Truth and reconciliation events aim to bring First Nations history to students

[The Argus](#)

October 2, 2013

Laura Rodgers

IN [B.C.](#), [NEWS](#) "It's not an Aboriginal problem; it's a part of Canadian history that happened, and it needs to be recognized."

VANCOUVER (CUP) — The difficult history of Canada's residential school system was shared in B.C. last week, at a national Truth and Reconciliation Commission event in Vancouver and various Reconciliation Week events across the province. At B.C. universities, students, faculty, and community groups came together to organize many such events, with the hope that this fraught part of history won't soon be forgotten.

Some universities, like UBC and the University of the Fraser Valley, cancelled classes on Wednesday, September 18 so that students could attend or watch Truth and Reconciliation events at Vancouver's Pacific National Exhibition grounds. At Simon Fraser University, students were allowed to miss classes during the week for Truth and Reconciliation events without academic consequences.

Alissa Derrick, a criminology and First Nations studies student at SFU, stressed the importance of informing more people about residential school history.

"It's not an Aboriginal problem; it's a part of Canadian history that happened, and it needs to be recognized," Derrick said.

Over 150,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Metis children and youths were forced to attend residential schools in Canada, in a period from the mid-nineteenth century until the last school closed in 1996. As part of the Canadian government's push to assimilate Aboriginal people, these schools attempted to separate the students from their cultural heritage.

Residential school students were isolated from their families, punished for speaking their first languages, and many suffered physical and emotional abuse. As part of a settlement agreement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up to share the history of residential schools with the Canadian public.

Derrick helped organize a number of events at SFU, including sharing circles with First Nations elders, ceremonies, and cultural performances.

She said other SFU students attending the events often didn't know the full history of residential schools, and some were shocked to learn it. Clayton Gray, another SFU student involved in organizing events, agreed.

"[They] do not come in with an adequate knowledge of what happened," said Gray. "It shocks the students, as they hear for the first time what the Canadian government has done."

At Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo, events included a group walk and student speeches. Rachel Brass, a VIU student, participated in these.

"I spoke about my experience being a youth in foster care, and a mature student returning to VIU. And how being a student at VIU ... has helped me find my aboriginal identity," said Brass.

"What happened here this week was a great way to support what was happening in Vancouver and the survivors over there," she continued. "I've had the opportunity to learn a different part of Canadian history. ... [Residential schools] aren't something that gets talked about often enough in public education."

And at UBC, director of First Nations studies, Linc Kessler said campus events helped to inform many students—but there's still more work to be done.

"Most students come to universities with very little understanding of Aboriginal issues or Aboriginal history," said Kessler, adding that this makes it more difficult for classes to move on to more advanced or nuanced discussions about Aboriginal people in Canada.

Kessler said universities have an important role in compiling knowledge about residential schools and educating the public about them. He's currently raising funds to set up a UBC-based research centre to study the history in depth.

"I think people are very open to understanding [the history]," said Kessler, "and we have a real obligation to tell them."

Aboriginal leaders issue eviction notice to shale gas testing company

[CTV Atlantic](#)

October 2, 2013 7:00PM ADT

Aboriginal leaders have issued an eviction notice to the company exploring for gas in New Brunswick, saying they weren't consulted before permits were issued.

A new protest site has popped up near Rexton, attracting hundreds of protesters since Sunday. The protesters are blocking access to a compound where shale gas testing trucks remain idle.

A member of the Mi'kmaq Warrior Society says their issue is not with the Houston-based company, SWN Resources, but with the government for failing to consult with them.



A new shale gas protest site has popped up near Rexton, attracting hundreds of protesters since Sunday. The protesters are blocking access to a compound where shale gas testing trucks remain idle. (CTV Atlantic)

"It is not about the company," says Suzanne Patles. "It is the Crown's fiduciary responsibility to consult prior to issuing the lease or permit so the

company needs to go back to the province and tell them that they are in the wrong."

New Brunswick Premier David Alward says it would be wrong not to explore the potential of shale gas and that the province should follow the lead of other resource-rich provinces.

"Those are the provinces that are growing their economies," says Alward. "Those are the provinces that are helping stabilize or grow their populations as well."

RCMP confirmed they have put up road blocks in the area for public safety and made two arrests Sunday, but would not talk about backfilling arrangements while officers are pulled from other communities, which was the case in the summer.

"I certainly don't think so. I can't confirm whether we have seen that or not," says RCMP Const. Julie Rogers-Marsh.

A political scientist at Mount Allison University says Louis LaPierre could be a wild card in the matter, after it was revealed the high-profile academic had misrepresented his credentials.

The reveal came at a bad time for the New Brunswick government because a pro-shale gas report written by LaPierre has been used heavily to argue their case.

"No one knows how that will play out. They had wanted someone with authority to manage the issue," says Wayne Hunt. "Now that authority has been called into question, so how is this going to work out?"

Another possible stumbling block is the eviction notice issued to SWN Resources by the Elsipogtog First Nation on Tuesday.

So far, there has been no movement on either side.

With files from CTV Atlantic's David Bell

Change bail system for natives: lawyer 'Gladue' consideration of background urged

[Winnipeg Free Press](#)

October 3, 2013

James Turner

A high-stakes legal battle over a young man's loss of freedom could trigger sweeping changes in how Manitoba judges account for the aboriginal heritage of accused persons in bail decisions.

Judges have a "judicial duty" to consider "Gladue" factors when aboriginal people apply for bail, and the Court of Queen's Bench should issue a ruling requiring those

factors be considered in decisions at that stage of the court process, city defence lawyer William Marks will argue today.

Gladue factors are derived from a landmark 1999 Supreme Court decision mandating judges to take an aboriginal offender's personal and cultural history of dislocation, disadvantage, addiction and abuse into account in sentencing.

They go hand-in-hand with the law on sentencing offenders, which states all options other than jailing them -- particularly aboriginals -- should be on the table when judges dispense punishment.

The law was changed in the 1990s by adding Sec. 718.2 (e) to the Criminal Code's sentencing provisions. It marked an attempt to address a dramatic overpopulation of aboriginals in provincial and federal jails, which has only gotten worse since. Currently, more than 70 per cent of inmates in Manitoba's provincial jails are aboriginal.

Marks seeks to have judges apply Gladue factors at "judicial interim release" (bail) hearings on the premise that aboriginal offenders are more likely to be jailed at the bail stage, which chafes against the spirit of the law. Virtually all bail hearings are held in provincial court.

"The door to incarceration exists at two stages -- bail and sentencing," Marks will argue, according to court documents obtained by the Free Press. "Given how closely the former is tied to the latter, it is respectfully submitted that failure to consider Gladue during bail frustrates the remedial purpose imagined in 718.2 (e)."

The case isn't likely to find favour with Crown prosecutors, who contend bail hearings are essentially "risk-management" proceedings in which the Gladue principles don't apply as they do at sentencing or consideration of parole eligibility. Underpinning Marks' fight is the fact his client, Christopher Ferland, is in custody after recently being denied a sixth chance at bail in provincial court. He's a periodically homeless young man with a learning disability and an unstable personal background. A school counsellor has described him as a "street kid."

Ferland, who has no prior criminal record, was first arrested for a domestic assault on Nov. 5, 2012, and was released by police on a promise to appear in court. In the following months, he's been accused of breaching bail conditions a number of times and returned to custody. His most recent arrest came just six days after being granted a fifth shot at bail by Judge Dale Harvey.

Judge Catherine Carlson refused to release the 20-year-old again on Sept. 12, saying his habit of being rearrested and detained after being given chances at freedom tied her hands.

"I have to say that I just feel it would be making a mockery of the whole system if I were to release you again," Carlson told him.

Marks argued Ferland didn't present a public risk and Carlson was obliged to consider Gladue factors at the bail hearing.

He said details she needed to weigh included racism Ferland claims he experienced in his dealings with police, his economic disadvantages and his involvement as a youth with the child-welfare system.

It's not the first time Gladue has been broached regarding bail hearings in Manitoba. In May 2012, Judge Marvin Garfinkel delayed his decision on whether to free a man accused of aggravated assault in order to get a Gladue report examining his background. Garfinkel ultimately found the report was "not helpful" to him.

with file from Mary Agnes Welch

First Nation Moves to Evict Fracking Co. From Lands Held in Trust

[Indian Country Today](#)

October 3, 2013

Martha Troian



Danny Knockwood/Shale Gas Alert, via Facebook Protesters against fracking in Kent County, New Brunswick, Canada, slept on the ground overnight on September 30 to try and stop SWN Resources Canada from conducting seismic testing for potential fracking.

It is supposed to be a day that commemorates the signing of the 1752 Treaty of Friendship and Peace between the Mi'kmaq and the Crown, a day spent promoting Mi'kmaq culture and history across Atlantic Canada.

Instead, Elsipogtog First Nation leaders and members marked Mi'kmaq Treaty Day by defending their land from fracking. First Nations in New

Brunswick said they've had enough of shale gas exploration in their territory, and they want a Texas-based exploration company to leave.

On October 1, Elsipogtog Chief and Council announced they were reclaiming all unoccupied reserve lands from the federal and provincial governments and issued an eviction notice to SWN Resources Canada, a subsidiary of Houston-based Southwestern Energy Co. Dozens of protesters blocked the main road traversed by company vehicles. The community was backed by the Signigtog District Grand Council, which represents Mi'kmaq communities across southern New Brunswick and northern Nova Scotia.

At a media conference in nearby Rexton, Elsipogtog Chief Aaren Sock said that the lands, never ceded or sold, had been held in trust by the Crown—but that the trust has been betrayed.

"The original people of the territory, together with their hereditary and elected leaders, believe that their lands and waters are being badly mismanaged by Canada, the province and corporations to the point of ruin," Sock said. "Now facing complete destruction, they feel that the lands are no longer capable of providing enough to support the populations of the region."

These threats to their survival and way of life left the Mi'kmaq of Signigtog no choice but to resume environmental stewardship in order to "save our water, land and animals from ruin," Sock said.

The controversy began last spring, when SWN began seismic testing in Kent County near Elsipogtog First Nation. Mi'kmaq have been fighting the company and the province ever since. Twelve people were arrested in protests in June.

The company said it is only in the exploratory stages, but First Nations and their supporters say it's only a matter of time before shale gas is found and the company employs the controversial technique known as fracking to get at it. Fracking, short for hydraulic fracturing, involves pumping water and chemicals underground at high pressure to fracture shale gas formations, making it easier to extract natural gas. Although the method is being used in other parts of Canada and the U.S., countries such as France have banned it, and the practice is under contention throughout Indian Country.

The Elsipogtog leadership also posted an eviction notice demanding that SWN remove all exploration equipment by midnight on September 30. However, it is unclear whether the notice was actually delivered to SWN officials, and as of October 2, SWN had not departed. Still, said members of the local Mi'kmaq warrior society, a group of Mi'kmaq who are defending Mi'kmaq lands and communities, the company needs to leave.

"Right now we're standing our ground and asking [SWN] to pull their equipment out of New Brunswick so that it will resolve peacefully," said John Levi, the warrior chief of Elsipogtog First Nation. "We're not going to back down."

Support is growing. First Nations in New Brunswick and their supporters have set up three resistance sites since SWN first brought in equipment.

"People from other communities, native people from Nova Scotia, Quebec, Prince Edward Island, and there's other natives from New Brunswick," said Levi of the indigenous nations on the ground.

Acadians, Metis, non-natives and environmental groups have also showed up. On Tuesday, 400 people came. Many supporters have been sleeping on the ground with just a blanket.

Some of the protesters, including a pregnant woman and several elders, have been hurt while facing off with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and private security forces. Lorraine Clair, 44, of Elsipogtog was struck by an RCMP vehicle during an incident this week. She was also injured in an earlier confrontation with the RCMP.

"She's a fish plant worker, so her wrists were already weakened, and she was still healing from that, and then when they arrested her they broke her wrist," said protester Willie Nolan.

Nolan said he also witnessed Clair getting struck by the cruiser.

"There is a lot of bullying taking place," said Levi about the RCMP and security.

But the protests seem to be having some effect. The activists have succeeded in stopping the SWN workers from proceeding.

"All the equipment has been fenced off," said Miles Howe, a reporter with New Brunswick Media Co-op who has been following this story closely since the beginning. Howe said five SWN seismic testing trucks were still present in their compound.

"As of right now, we're not going to let [SWN] come out and do their work on the highway, that's for sure," said Levi. "We will let them out but not let them back in."

To date there has been no response by the New Brunswick government.

FN Health Authority seeks to improve health outcomes for aboriginals

[Chilliwack Progress](#)

October 03, 2013 10:00 AM

Jennifer Feinberg

The newly activated First Nations Health Authority can be seen as the "next natural step" in the evolution of health service delivery for B.C. aboriginals, said Grand Chief Doug Kelly of Sto:lo Tribal Council.

Some programs delivered to aboriginals in B.C. that were a Health Canada responsibility last week, now fall under the aegis of the newly minted First Nations Health Authority.

As chair of the First Nations Health Council, Grand Chief Kelly has a mandate for advocacy and reciprocal accountability for FNHA, and as such has been front and centre as they complete a formal transfer on Oct. 1, of programs, resources, staff, assets and more.

"What we achieved today is elevating the work that began many years ago," he said Tuesday in a phone interview with the Progress. "We have proven we could take on the responsibilities that were once Health Canada's, and that we could blend the best of two worlds, the best of modern medicine and the best of our cultural traditions and ceremonies."

"We knew that what we did locally we could do regionally, and what we did regionally we could do right across the province."

The FNHA, as a result of a signed agreement, will take on delivery of health programs and services in B.C. to aboriginals living on-reserve and off. It's everything from primary care to mental health and addictions as well as environmental health and research, and they'll be partnering with the province as well.

It's nothing new for Sto:lo communities, but it's quite a feat to see it clear across the province, said Kelly.

He'll be responsible for ensuring the work meets the expectations of chiefs, health directors and citizens.

On the [website](#) a basic question is explained: "Why a First Nations Health Authority? Statistically significant health disparities exist for First Nations people in BC and across Canada. The First Nations Health Authority aims to reform the way health care is delivered to BC First Nations to close these gaps and improve health and well being."

And it continues: "BC First Nations, the Province of BC, and the Government of Canada have all determined that First Nations health disparities are no longer acceptable. A New Relationship between these Tripartite Partners was forged and a series of precedent-setting agreements led to the creation of a First Nations Health Authority."

Grand Chief Kelly saw the need for this kind of self-reliant service delivery when he was the youngest chief of Soowahlie First Nation in the 1980s, in the early days of the Sto:lo Tribal Council.

With First Nations communities seeking economic development opportunities through creation of land codes, and taxation, the takeover of health service delivery is in a similar vein.

"It's important to observe that where First Nations governments are exercising control, there are better outcomes. When they design and deliver the programming, there are better outcomes.

How will the average Sto:lo in Chilliwack notice the transfer?

"Initially we don't want them to notice. It will be a seamless transfer with no disruption or minimal disruption in service. But in the coming months we want to transform programs and make significant improvements.

It's about getting access to primary care and a family doctor, even for people in rural and remote communities.

He knew about the challenges rurally, but Kelly said he was surprised to learn that many First Nations people living in greater Vancouver did not have access to a family doctor. Better access means better care.

"The most expensive kind of health care anyone can get is inside the emergency room of the local hospital, and that's where many are going, so we'll make certain to move to a better form care, and access to that care."

The goal is to produce better outcomes.

So what will that look like?

It's changing a sickness model of care, one that treats disease, into a wellness model.

"It's one that not only tilts the investment toward treating illness, but also invests in health promotion and prevention of disease."

"Health" is an outcome, Kelly said he's come to recognize is an "outcome of housing, of education, of income, of strong, healthy families."

What they've created with the new health authority is a way to change the very social determinants of health.

"So it doesn't matter where people live, if they can't access the kind of services we take for granted. We need to make those changes and we will."